

Aboard The Chilton Grange

Crew of a Water-Logged Ship Mutinies in Mid-Ocean

By RALPH D. PAINE

The Chilton Grange, a British tramp, lay at anchor in the harbor of New York. She was an uncouth, wall-sided steamer of three thousand tons, with bridge and deck-houses rising like an island amidships, indistinguishable from a hundred others of her kind that hardly roam the seas in search of trade.

Captain Nelson Sackett sat at the desk in his small cabin and tried to write a letter to his wife. The task was not so pleasant as usual. His solid shoulders were hunched forward, the ruddy, interpid countenance was clouded, and he wiped a perspiring brow with his shirt sleeve after making several false starts with a sputtering pen.

At length he managed to say what it sorely troubled him to disclose, and then, with a reader mind, he wrote these closing words:

You and I will laugh over this when I steam into the Mersey and you are waiting for me on the landing stage with the youngster holding fast to your hand. Bless him!—that was a fine school report for an eight-year-old that he sent me at Rio. I shall have some time to play with him while the ship is in Liverpool. I am loving you, Judith, the same as always, and I shall ever be your fond and faithful husband.

In haste to post the letter in the next outbound mail, he sent a boat ashore with it, and went below to consult the chief engineer.

When he returned to the deck, a small tug was making for the Chilton Grange at top speed, frantically blowing its whistle to attract notice.

As it foamed alongside Captain Sackett saw standing in front of the wheelhouse a tall, smartly tailored young man with a pink and white complexion, unmistakably English, his smile frank and boyish.

Flourishing his straw hat, the young man called up:

"Not such an awful lot of time to spare—what? They told me at the wharf that you had cleared for Liverpool. I should like to come aboard, if you please."

He held a kit bag, and the two leather trunks in the bow were obviously his property. The puzzled shipmaster bluntly replied:

"You have chased the wrong vessel. Better have another try at it. Undismayed, the debonair young man calmly returned:

"Not a bit of it. This is precisely all right. The Chilton Grange is what I want. Hoist this luggage aboard, will you?"

"Drunk or daffy," said Captain Nelson to his elderly first mate. "A person who mistakes us for a passenger boat has violent delusions."

The voice of the young man floated up to them in amiable expostulation:

"I fancied you might recognize me. Evidently not. Stupid of me! I am Mr. Hayden Norcross, you know. My father happens to own the Chilton Grange."

Captain Sackett's mouth hung open while he stared down at the tug. Rhoades, the melancholy first mate, clung to the rail and forgot his errand. The seamen within earshot scuffled to the side to view the sensational stranger.

"You are the son of Sir James Babb Norcross?" incredulously cried the skipper.

"The only one there is, my dear man. I can't very well give you my card until you let me aboard. I intend to sail with you."

"You intend to sail with me? I don't know about that. Of course if you put it to me as an order; but—" The captain spoke slowly, his rather stolid features working with some hidden emotion.

Crisply, with a touch of impatience, the heir of the great shipping house of Norcross exclaimed as he made for the side ladder:

"Oh, I say, drop that nonsense! You and I will have to get on better than this. Please do as I tell you."

With a shrug Captain Sackett ordered the trunks taken aboard, and noted that they bore the stenciled name of Hayden Norcross. Again engagingly affable, the young man remarked as he scrambled to the deck: "It rather stumps you, I presume. I call it jolly good luck. It's the first time I ever booked myself in one of the governor's ships."

Uncomfortable, reluctant, the captain strove to be courteous, and said as they walked forward:

"I didn't mean to be short with you, sir; but I'm not at all anxious to carry you to England. It is not the sort of travel you are accustomed to, and—"

"Oh, I shall have to learn the shipping business when I get home,"

laughed the other, "and this is a useful experience. I don't mind roughing it."

Captain Sackett's voice was unsteady as he asked:

"How did the notion happen to seize you, Mr. Norcross?"

"I have been globe-trotting (went out by way of Suez), having a look at the silly old world before putting my nose to the grindstone. Like a cheerful ass I neglected to reserve a room in a liner, and when I reached New York a few days ago every boat was jammed full—the summer rush of Americans. I was tired of loafing about, and by chance I spied a shipping item about the Chilton Grange—one of the Norcross freighters, by Jove!—bound to Liverpool in ballast. 'Here goes!' said I—and here I am."

Hayden Norcross gazed about him as though well pleased with his choice of transportation. The decks were scrubbed white, the brasswork gleamed like gold, and the houses had been freshly painted. Her master did his best by the steamer, although Sir James Babb Norcross crumbled at the cost and pared the bills to the bone.

"I call this ripping!" declared the young man. "Quite as if I were in my own yacht—no beastly crowd, and a leisurely voyage. You mustn't look so put out about it, Captain Sackett. I promise not to make a nuisance of myself."

"Very well, sir. You have the right to do as you like. You are inviting yourself, please remember that. I shall try my best to give you a comfortable passage."

"It is my own surprise party," was the cheerful rejoinder. "How long before we head for the open sea?"

"Two or three hours. What about sending word to your father that you are in the Chilton Grange, Mr. Norcross?"

"I shall write at once," was the easy reply. "The letter will reach Liverpool ahead of us. What's the use of cabling?"

"I am afraid today's mail has closed, but there will be another sailing this week. Aye, the letter will be in England before we are. And you will be sure to mention that you asked yourself aboard and I objected?"

"Still harping on the same string," exclaimed Hayden Norcross. "I solemnly swear to absolve you from from all part and share in my voyage."

The captain showed an odd unwillingness, but this was doubtless a natural feeling of responsibility in the case of so important a personage as the son of Sir James Babb Norcross. No rudeness was intended.

In lovely June weather the Chilton Grange left port. Captain Nelson Sackett had handled men for many years, and he appraised them shrewdly. This youngster was generous, clean, unspoiled by golden fortune. It was impossible to dislike him.

At table in the cabin, Rhoades and the chief engineer, quiet, shy men, were not at their ease in the company of the owner's son, but he could not be held blameworthy. His was an effulgent name, and the barrier of caste oppressed their honest British souls. It was singular that his presence should not have aroused their resentment, for they dumbly felt that the Norcross millions had been sweated out of the ocean-carrying trade and that the titled owner in Liverpool could afford to deal more justly with his men and ships.

The passenger's appetite was good, his digestion perfect, but the duce of it was that he could not seem to get enough to eat. A chap felt awkward about mentioning the fact, but if he expected to control a few dozen steamers himself some day he really ought to find out a few things. In such a well-kept ship as this short rations, and rotten bad at that, seemed confoundingly queer.

"I say, what's the program for feeding these boats?" he rang out to the skipper, who was in the chart-room. "What I mean is, how are they provisioned?"

Captain Sackett grinned. He had an unobtrusive sense of humor. Until now he had tactfully avoided ruffling the young man.

"Most of the stuff is put aboard at Liverpool," he told him, "excepting a little fresh grub picked up from port to port. The ship has an expense allowance. If a master exceeds it he goes into his own bally pockets to foot the difference."

"By jove! I must speak to the governor about it," ingeniously ex-

claimed the son. "With so many large interests I fancy he has to leave this sort of things to an understrapper. He won't like it, I'm sure."

"We don't like it," frankly confessed Captain Sackett. "It is hard to get men to stay in these ships. They have the name of starving their crews."

"How absurd!" and the young man began to pace the deck. "Sir James would be shocked. If you only knew him! He is the most open-handed, considerate old boy in Liverpool—always founding or endowing something or other. And in his own home—why, he can never do enough for his people."

The skipper withstood the provocation to say more. It was hopeless to try to make the son understand that the Sir James Babb Norcross he knew was not the man his shipmasters cursed behind his back.

But in the captain's silent scrutiny Hayden Norcross detected something like pity. He colored and spoke sharply.

"You think my father is responsible for this outrageous provender. I should say you owe me an apology."

"I can't quite fathom why," gravely replied Captain Sackett. "I have accused nobody. However, I like to see a man stand up for his dad."

This was the nearest they came to an issue until the Chilton Grange ran into a succession of gales, and it ceased to be a holiday lark of a voyage. Under lowering skies, over a sea gray and unheaved, she crept sluggishly eastward, her speed falling off day by day. It had not been expected that at this season of the year she would have to struggle against shouting head winds and thundering combers. June was supposed to be a halcyon month.

The Atlantic pounded the laboring steamer with gigantic blows, and across the well deck the waves hissed in frothing green floods. The crew became spent and bruised and disheartened. Sleep and rest were denied them. They damned the ship and the sea, crawling about in wet clothes, clinging to life lines and stanchions, or climbing from the fire-room to ease their burns and fill their tortured lungs with cool air.

The bonds of discipline had held them silent as long as luck favored the voyage. Now Hayden Norcross heard them call his father names to curdle one's blood. And as the weather turned even more menacing they yelled jeeringly at him when the officers were not present to check them.

Their derisive gratification because he was in the same boat with them made him wince and shiver. He tried to piece together the wind-blown fragments of what they said. His smooth pink cheek was a shade paler and his eyes were troubled as he shouted in Captain Sackett's ear:

"I can't stand much more from these filthy blackguards. Can't you put a stop to it? What are they jawing about? Am I a sort of Jonah? You might think this ship was a floating coffin when she left New York harbor."

"Perhaps she was!" roared Captain Sackett as he watched a huge sea tumble over the bows while the Chilton Grange quivered and groaned in every plate and beam.

He looked wrinkled and old as he stood braced on the bridge in his dripping oilskins.

"I tried to keep you out of it," he added. "I said all I could, all I was obliged to. But you had to play this game with me. And by what the barometer tells me God Almighty may take a hand in it before sundown!"

His impassioned earnestness bewildered Hayden Norcross, who had not dreamed of danger. With the superb egotism of his years and station he believed it impossible that disaster could befall when he was on board. The tumult of wind and sea was terrifying, but what genuinely frightened him was the glimpse of some mystery, sinister and tragic, that had been purposely withheld from his knowledge. The captain and the crew gave him the impression that the ship had been foredoomed.

(Concluded in Next Issue.)

AVIATOR BETTERS RECORD

Paris, Sept. 27.—(Via London.) Sub-Lieut. Nungesser of the aviation service, whose exploits have made him the best known of the French aerial fighters, outdid his previous achievements yesterday by bringing down two aeroplanes and a captive balloon. This brings up to seventeen the number of aircraft destroyed by this aviator, says today's statement.

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Twenty Years from Today a Bald-headed Man Will Be an Unusual Sight.

One of the most prominent druggists of America made a statement a few weeks ago which has caused a great deal of discussion among scientists in the medical press.

He said: "If the new hair grower, Mildredina Hair Remedy, increases its sales as it has during the past year, it will be used by nearly every man, woman and child in America within eight years."

"When Mildredina Hair Remedy is used almost universally, dandruff will disappear and with its departure baldness, itching scalp, splitting hair and all scalp diseases will follow and twenty years from now a bald head will be a rarity."

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It is the most pleasant and invigorating tonic, is not sticky, or greasy and is used extensively by ladies of refinement who desire to have and to keep their hair soft, lustrous and luxuriant. Fifty cents for a large bottle druggists everywhere. Mail orders filled by American Proprietary Co., Boston, Mass.

CUT THIS OUT.

FREE to show how quickly Mildredina Hair Remedy acts, we will send a large sample free by return mail to anyone who sends this Coupon to American Proprietary Co., Boston, Mass., with their name and address and ten cents in silver or stamps to pay postage.

DIES FROM INJURIES.

Mississippi Woman Follows Husband and Daughter.

Vicksburg, Miss., Sept. 27.—Mrs. T. A. Chichester of Edwards, Miss., died here tonight from injuries received in an automobile accident last Thursday night. The accident already has caused the deaths of T. A. Chichester, husband of the woman who died tonight, and Gertrude, their daughter. Another daughter and two young women in the car at the time of the accident received minor injuries. The automobile, driven by Mrs. Chichester, was struck by an Alabama & Vicksburg passenger train near Smith station.

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